

VZCZCXYZ0013  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHGT #1515/01 2112238  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 302238Z JUL 07  
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3420  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 001515

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KJUS](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [SOCI](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS: COLOM RETAINS LEAD IN FINAL STRETCH AMID VOTER  
INDECISION

REF: GUATEMALA 1429 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. Summary: As the election campaign enters its final 45 days, voter tendencies remain unchanged; Alvaro Colom (UNE) and Otto Perez Molina (PP) continue to maintain a significant lead in the polls over second-tier candidates, and there remains a large undecided segment of the electorate. A recent Vox Latina poll on the second round shows only a slight three-point lead for Colom, while a Borge y Asociados poll shows a much wider spread between the top two contenders. While it is too soon to predict the dynamics of the second round, the polls show Colom to be the favorite. End summary.

#### The Top Five

-----

¶2. Two recent polls show that candidates' positions have remained relatively stable over the past few months. In a July 30 Borge y Asociados poll, Alvaro Colom of center-left National Unity for Hope (UNE) ranked first, with 33 percent intention of vote (up from 28 percent in June), Otto Perez Molina of center-right Partido Patriota (PP) ranked second, with 23.1 percent (up from 13 percent in June), while governing party GANA candidate Alejandro Giammattei got 8.9 percent (up from 6 percent in June) and Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchu got 5.5 percent (down from 7 percent in June).

¶3. Results of a recent Vox Latina poll, conducted by simulated ballot and published July 25, generally coincide with the Borge poll, although it puts Menchu in fifth place, behind Eduardo Suger of Center of Social Action. The poll shows Colom retaining his lead with 21.33 percent (up from 20.75 percent in June) intention of vote, and widest support among the indigenous population, rural areas, and among those who earn less than Q1,500 (USD 197) per month. Perez Molina continues in second place with 14.42 percent (up from 12.25 percent), with most of his support in urban areas and the central region and among those who earn more than Q1,500 per month.

¶4. Giammattei is in third with 8.17 percent, while Eduardo Suger, trailing with 2.50 percent, has moved up to fourth from seventh place. Menchu is in fifth place with 2.42 percent, up from 1.50 percent last month. Giammattei's supporters are largely college students and professionals with incomes of more than Q3,000 (USD 395) per month. Suger is popular among youth and university students, while Menchu is more popular among the indigenous than among ladinos.

¶5. In rural areas, Colom has the largest percentage of intention of vote, with 22.2 percent. Among the indigenous population, Colom is also the favorite, with 23.1 percent, followed by Perez Molina with 13.6 percent and Giammattei with 7.4 percent. Among the college-educated, Giammattei is the preferred candidate, with 16.9 percent, compared to Colom and Perez Molina, each with 15.7 percent.

#### The Second Round

-----

¶16. According to the Vox Latina poll, Colom would only have a slight lead in the second round, with 51.5 percent of the votes, over Perez Molina, with 48.5 percent. The Borge poll shows a greater margin between Colom and Perez Molina, with Colom getting 52.2 percent and Perez Molina getting 38 percent.

¶17. Colom continues to have weak support in the capital, and his campaign has been beset by crises: a recent vote in a congressional committee against the International Commission for Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), reflecting division within his own party on a critical security measure; an investigation against a high-profile party official for alleged ties to organized crime; and allegations of a smear campaign against Perez Molina for suggesting that his party intentionally masterminded attacks against bus drivers to bolster support for his "mano dura" campaign.

#### The Undecided

-----  
¶18. According to the latest Vox Latina poll, 37.92 percent remain undecided (down from 40.42 percent in the last poll in June). Analysts commented that the drop in the percentage of undecided voters signaled a positive development, with a move toward consolidation of the top two candidates, although it was too early to predict who would capture the votes of supporters of former presidential candidate Harold Caballeros, who withdrew from the race after failing to register his party in time.

#### Comment

-----  
¶19. Voter tendencies have not changed over the course of the past few months. Colom, with widespread name recognition from his two prior bids for the presidency, and first-time candidate Perez Molina, with his "mano dura" campaign, remain the top two contenders. They present distinctly different personalities and

appeal to different sectors of the population. While polls show conflicting point spread in the November run-off, it is too soon to predict the dynamics of a second round.